Operations Rooms HMA Ships WW2

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My sea time was spenat almost entirely in HMAS Shropshire, so I will describe my recollections of the situation as regards Operations Rooms in that ship.

In Shropshire we did not have a centralised Operations Room as I understand all ships now have. Instead we had a number of different locations each of which had a particular function. These were:

Navigation. Directly under the bridge was the Plotting Office. This had a table on which the appropriate chart would be spread under a glass panel. A spot of light from underneath was movedto follow the ships course and speed, and the person on watch would mark its position at intervals. There was an opening abovethrough which the chart could be viewed from the bridge. We had an American SG radar with PPI display (the only PPI we had) , mounted in the Plot.

Gunnery Control – Main Armament Surface Targets. The TS (Transmitting Station) was installed well down in the ship and forward of the boiler rooms. It was manned by Bandsmen with a Warrant Gunner in charge. The fire control table could be described as a 'mechanical computer", and was slightly smaller than a billiard table. Information fed into it would be:
* Ship's course and speed
* Target range available from either the optical rangefinder in the main armament directoror from either of the 2 radar displays in the TS. These were the 285 with antenna mounted on the main armament director or the 273 which was independent. At all times the radar range was more accurate than the visual, although in good visibility there was little difference.
* Target bearing. In conditions of good visibility visual bearing was more precise than radarbut in poor visibility or at night radar bearing was adequate for the purpose. Target course and speed was estimatedfrom this information, adjustments applied for wind etc, all providing the necessary data for setting the guns.

Gunnery Control – High Angle Guns. Shropshire had four twin mountsof 4 inch HA guns and a type 285 radar with antenna mounted on the HA director. These guns were used for long range anti aircraft defence. They were controlled by a gun contol tablesimilar to but smaller than that in the TS.

Gunnery Control – Auto Barrage Units. We had four of these units, one for each main armament turret. I think that once the Gunnwery Offier on the bridge had given an order to use a particular turret to atack a particular aircraft, control of the operation was the responsibility of the Gun Captain in the turret.